

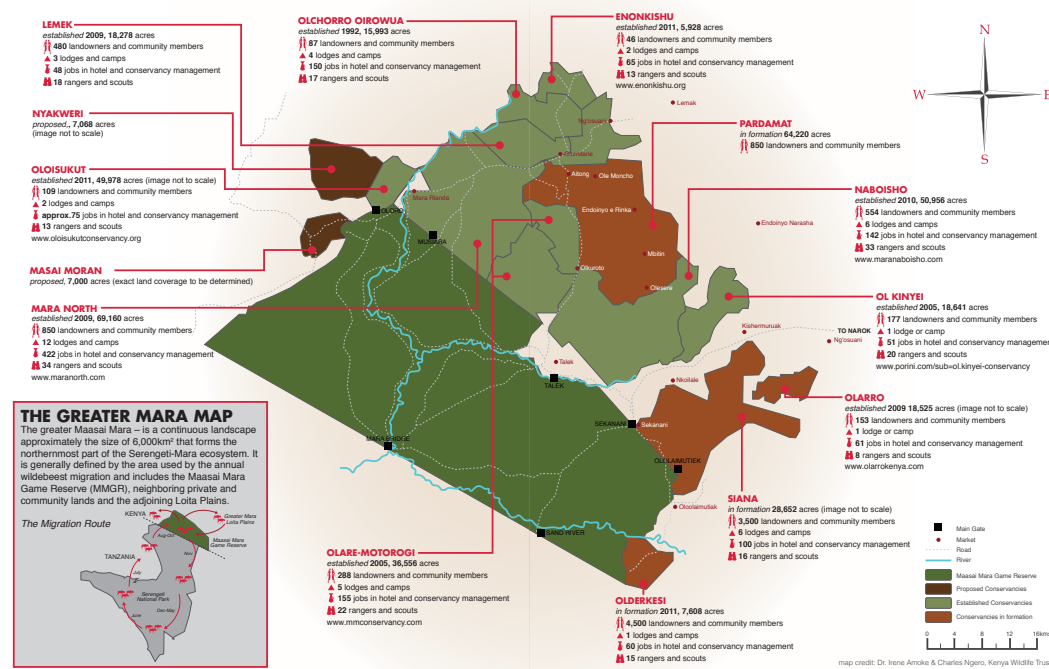


Introduction

The Cultural and Natural Resource Conservation Action Plan (CNR-CAP) responds to the need to undertake an integrated planning process across the different conservancies neighbouring the Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR), to effectively address pervasive, increasing threats to wildlife and ecosystems across the greater Mara ecosystem. Considering the importance that the Maasai people and their culture have had in shaping the landscape, this action plan took into account the fact that the greater Mara ecosystem is, above all, a cultural landscape.

The Greater Mara Ecosystem

Conservancies across the greater Mara ecosystem were established both organically and independently, however they face few stand-alone individual issues. In fact, more than in many other large conservation areas, critical threats and constraints are shared across the Maasai Mara, not only among well-established conservancies, but also in the neighbouring areas that do not yet have conservation management.



Above: Map showing the geographical scope of the Conservation Action Plan, comprising a Core Area, which expands to all existing conservancies and surrounding areas where new conservancies or conservation areas are proposed, and an Influence Area, encompassing important areas for conservation, east of the Core Area.

- More than 95 species of mammals
- Over 500 species of birds
- Approx. 25% of Kenya's total wildlife
- Only 25% of ecosystem is government-protected
- 1,300km² covered by conservancies
- 5,000 landowners' livelihoods supported by conservancies (equivalent to an estimated 40,000 people)

Targets, Threats & Recommendations

The **Cultural & Natural Resources Conservation Action Plan** for the Maasai Mara conservancies identifies **8 Conservation Targets, 11 Major Threats** and **5 Strategic Recommendations**:

| TARGETS | GOALS | STATUS | THREATS | RECOMMENDATIONS | |
|----------------|---|--------|--|--|--|
| ELEPHANT | Maintain the status of GOOD by conserving their habitat, movement space and grass availability | GOOD | High Fencing Unplanned Settlements & Urbanisation Uncontrolled/Unsustainable Grazing Human Wildlife Conflict Charcoal Burning & Logging Infrastructure Medium Poaching Agriculture Land Use Loss of Maasai Culture Low Sand Extraction Pollution | Conservation Strategy Land Use Planning for a Long-Term Functional Ecosystem Sustainable Grazing and Beef Production Preserving the Maasai Culture Harmonious Coexistence of People and Nature Long-term Financial Stability for the Conservancies | Focus Expand land under conversation and good quality management, allowing degraded areas to be restored, increasing land resilience and connectivity across the ecosystem. Reduce the competition between livestock and wildlife, by decreasing the herds of cattle and goats, while increasing the productivity and income generated by livestock and the Mara's rangelands. Preserve the empowering Maasai cultural pillars, encouraging the Maasai community to honour their culture and be respectful of their surroundings, leading to harmonious relations between people, wildlife and their local environment. Keep wildlife populations stable and reduce the human footprint on the environment, to enable people and nature to co-exist. The maximization of revenue streams through cattle enterprise, philanthropic support, carbon credits and other potential sources. |
| LIION | Maintain the status of GOOD by conserving their habitat, improving connectivity within the ecosystem and conserving their prey base | GOOD | | | |
| WILDEBEEST | Raise the status to GOOD by conserving their migration routes and calving area as well as improving grass quality and availability | FAIR | | | |
| FORESTS | No net loss of all key habitats in terms of area the GME | POOR | | | |
| GRASSLANDS | No net reduction in connectivity indices for all key habitats | FAIR | | | |
| WOODLANDS | No net loss of landscape heterogeneity in the GME. Maintain both the species and structural diversity represented within the woodland, forest and grassland habitats. | FAIR | | | |
| MAASAI CULTURE | Raise to the status of GOOD | FAIR | | | |
| TOURISM | Raise to the status of VERY GOOD | FAIR | | | |

Conservation Action Plan

4 strategies

8 conservation targets

11 major threats

Result

A Cultural Landscape Where Communities and Partners Secure Wildlife and Sustainable Livelihoods for a Better Future

The Maasai Mara, along with the neighbouring Serengeti, represents the most iconic landscape of Africa in the world. This fame is due not only to its wildlife, the large mammals and the particular beauty of the savannahs, but also because it is a long-inhabited landscape where people, the Maasai, have traditionally played an important role in shaping the ecosystem for at least three thousand years (Reid 2012). Indeed, the greater Mara ecosystem is not any different to other grassland ecosystems in the world – it is mostly a cultural landscape, where wildlife and humans have coexisted for centuries.

| Conservation Strategy | Key Objectives |
|--|---|
| Land Use Planning for a Long-Term Functional Ecosystem | 1. Finalise and distribute the Conservation Action Plan, ensuring it informs Narok County Spatial Plan. 2. Undertake an economic land use valuation study. 3. With KWS, begin the process to develop an ecosystem plan for the greater Mara ecosystem. 4. Map all unprotected areas, within the agreed zone, identifying existing land use, migratory corridors, areas and features of specific importance. 5. Develop rural/urban planning guidelines for trading centres and areas within 3km of the Reserve and conservancies. |
| Sustainable Grazing and Beef Production | 1. Identify land carrying capacities for the various regions of the Mara. Then implement sustainable grazing in conservancies, taking into account forage assessments. 2. Finalise cattle business plans including the key components of fattening, quality breeding and commercial sales for at least two conservancies. Plus secure funds for implementation. 3. Design a program to facilitate community livestock to be managed sustainably in areas neighbouring the conservancies. |
| Preserving the Maasai Culture | 1. Define the principle and empowering Maasai cultural pillars. 2. Launch a Mara-wide cultural pride campaign engaging with all Mara stakeholders. |
| Harmonious Coexistence of People and Nature | 1. Identify causes and means of managing the high population growth rate across the Mara region, and start to put into action the identified ways forward. 2. Monitor the number of illegal acts concerning wildlife across the greater Mara and work to ensure the law is both understood and enforced to reduce these acts. 3. Design a way forward for wildlife population data, that builds and integrates existing data practices while establishing regular coordinated monitoring of wildlife and ecology. 4. Showcase efficient charcoal production techniques and alternative energy, as well as fuel efficient and alternative cooking methods and materials. 5. Ensure the enforcement of laws and regulations by the authorities in forest protection, while developing a carbon credit scheme and promoting the use of alternative or sustainable construction materials. 6. Ensure a water action plan is in place to protect and sustain strong and fertile soil cover, as well as year round flow of surface water. 7. Develop an adaptation and mitigation programme based upon existing and future impacts of climate change. |
| Long-term Financial Stability for the Conservancies | 1. Identify potential economies of scale and reductions in costs of conservancies, as possible. 2. Develop at least one carbon-based initiative as a source of funds. 3. Review the Mara Conservancies financial model, to identify potential improvements for all involved parties. 4. Secure philanthropic funding and other non-financial support for individual and cross-conservancy initiatives. 5. Establish cattle enterprises with the purpose of raising income for conservancies in the medium term. 6. Develop a framework for a Mara-wide conservancies' tourism strategy emphasizing their unique marketing points. |

“ We need to understand that the [Maasai] Mara has always been a free-roaming space for wildlife, livestock and people ”

Resident of the Pardamat region